AMERICA'S DEBT TO LAFAYETTE NOW BEING RECOGNIZED

Birthday Celebration on Wednesday Part of Nation's Gratitude for Frenchman's Sacrifices---W. D. Guthrie Outlines Why the United States Should Study More Carefully What France Did to Secure Our Liberties

By WILLIAM D. GUTHRIE.
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As Washington declared, the generosity of France to America during the War of the Revolution "must inspire every citizen of the States with sentiments of the most unalterable gratitude." During the course of our history since 1783 the remembrance of that feeling of gratitude has undoubtedly seemed to be dim at times, but there are many evidences of its full revival in our own day. The heroism and fortitude and the misfortune and sacrifices of the French people during the past two years have reawakened in every section of the United States, East and West, North and South, the old feeling of sympathy, affection and gratitude. Even among our citizens of German birth or descent we find warm sympathy with France, unstinted admiration of her heroic spirit and conduct and full appreciation of the historic ties which bind the hearts of Americans to the French people.

The celebration by Americans on Wednesday, September 6, of the anniversary of the birth of Lafayette is indeed singularly fitting and appropriate and should be looked upon as a patriotic duty. Among the generation of Frenchmen who helped us in gaining our independence the Marquis de Lafayette will always be the foremost figure as the very incarnation of the spirit of pro-American sympathy and enthusiasm that produced the treaty of alliance of February 6, 1778, and made our ultimate triumph possible.

As he wrote to his wife from on board La Victoire on his way to America, he regarded his coming military service under Washington, what it truly turned out to be, "a brevet of immortality," and he earned immortality by heroism, soldierly zeal, uprightness and loyalty of the highest order, and by winning not only the undying admiration and affection of Washington but the universal and immutable esteem and affection of the American officers and soldiers with whom he served.

In the past we have been charged by some French writers with ingratitude. As ingratitude is the most dishonorable and unpardonable of all crimes, individual or national, it is to be hoped at an early day some competent historian will take up and wholly refute this charge. At any rate, I pray that it shall not be true of this generation of Americans.

Such a historian might eloquently point out the curious nemesis which has followed the history of the French on our continent. It is a very long and complicated and extremely sad story, each series of splendid and glorious exploits of Frenchmen being followed by disaster and eclipse. Everywhere on our continent there are evidences of heroic services by Frenchmen—monuments, ideals, traditions and institutions sprung from French courage, genius and art; but nowhere has France secured adequate return or recognition; nowhere has she reaped material rewards from the seed she sowed. Consider French Canada planted by the sacrifice of her children of France and growing up and prospering under another flag.

Such a historian would also be able to explain the causes of the misunderstanding, irritation and friction which unfortunately arose between the Governments of the United States and France, and which for more than a century clouded our relations and chilled the underlying feeling of cordial sympathy and affection between the two peoples. The Governments too often held each other at arm's length, and functionaries and politicians too often misinterpreted the feelings of the people and misrepresented the permanent and best interest of their respective countries.

The irritation began with our first tariff legislation of 1790 and the tonnage duty it imposed, which the French believed was aimed at them and which led to retaliatory measures. Then came President Washington's stand for neutrality in 1793, and Genet's intolerable affronts to Americans and the request for his recall. The friction became still more acute in 1798 by reason of the many high-handed acts of the Directoire. Indeed, we were at one time almost drifting into war, for their were actual hostilities at sea between American and French vessels.

Then followed the treatment by Congress of the claims of the French Beaumarchais and his heirs, and our disgraceful haggling over the account, which was not settled until 1835, thirty-six years after Beaumarchais's death, and which left a legacy of meanness and discredit. It shames us to have to confess that Congress forced a settlement of a just claim for war upplie furnihed by Beaumarchal during the Revolution, on the basis of our paying his heirs only twenty-five cents on the dollar, after a delay of more than half a century. In fact, we paid one-seventh of the amount which forty-two years before Alexander Hamilton had decided was justly due to Beaumarchais. Our treatment of this claim, whatever the excuse and however our national Government was originally misled by the jealousy and venom of Arthur Lee, will ever remain a blot on our fame, and it is one of those pages in our history which we ought to expunge even at this late date.

The existing coolness was intensified in 1835-1836 by the rudeness of President Jackson in connection with the French spoliation claims, leading to the suspension of diplomatic relations, when the United States recalled Livingston from Paris and France recalled Pageot from Washington, and very nearly precipitated war. Then later came the unfriendliness of Napoleon III. during our civil war and his ill-fated campaign in Mexico, which was regarded by us as a direct menace to our interests as well as a deliberate violation of the Monroe Doctrine. During the Spanish-American War of 1898 the affection of Americans was again chilled by the natural sympathy of France with her neighbor, Spain, although the conduct of the French Government was irreproachable.

Finally, the purchase of the property of the bankrupt French Panama Canal Company in 1902 eliminated the last real danger from conflicting interests, and Franco-American relations have recently been on a more satisfactory basis than at any time since 1790. Throughout all the years, however, the American people never forgot what they owed to France and how much France had contributed to the ultimate success and triumph of the Revolution.

It should be remembered that long before the Treaty of Alliance of February 6, 1778, the French had rendered much material assistance to the American cause. Aside from the free gifts of King Louis XVI. and the personal services and contributions of such men as Lafayette, most of the effective equipment of the Continental Army had come from France. Our own historian Perkins in his "France in the American Revolution," writing of Beaumarchais's contributions, says:

"Beaumarchais's ships escaped the perils of the sea and the vigilance of British cruisers. They reached Portsmouth and landed greatly needed supplies in time to be used against Burgoyne. Many a soldier who marched in that campaign (June-October, 1777) wore shoes on his feet, a coat on his back and carried a gun on his shoulder, which came from the magazines of Louis XVI., and had been procured and furnished by the author of the 'Barber of Seville.' Several more ships, loaded by Beaumarchais, were allowed to sail from France and in due time reached their destination. By September, 1777, he had shipped munitions of war to the value of five million livres."

But not until February of the following year was the treaty signed.

The preeminent service rendered by France during the American Revolution has never, it seems to me, been adequately recognized by American historians—certainly not in the histories used in our schools—perhaps in some instances because of the natural disinclination to concede how near the Americans came to utter failure, and perhaps also because of the equally natural hesitation to give most of the credit for success to our allies. Yet, surely, no one reading the records of those days as they are now at hand can fail to realize that, without the soldiers and funds and support of France, the American Revolution would have been crushed.

The efforts of the Alliance Francaise, the Layette Fund for French Soldiers, the France-America Committee, the Lafayette Anniversary Committee and others organizations which have recently sprung into activity have undoubtedly revived in America the study of the services rendered to our country by France and brought renewed and fuller appreciation and recognition of our debt to the French people. The celebration generally of Lafayette's birthday must be particularly stimulating, and appropriate and eloquent tributes will undoubtedly be paid to his services, as well as to the services of his French companions in arms and the generous pecuniary assistance of France and Frenchmen. Brandywine, Valley Forge, Monmouth Court House and Yorktown will always be a deep source of inspiration.

Crowning all is the love of Lafayette for Washington, whom he idolized; Lafayette's superb loyalty to his chief, the affection as of father to adopted son, with which the grandest and noblest of all Americans regarded the young and ardent and idealistic French aristocrat, the gallant Black Musketeer of King Louis's Household, who served so bravely and unselfishly by his side. The name of Lafayette will always be associated in the hearts of Americans with that of Washington. All who have visited Mount Vernon will recall "Lafayette's Room."

One of the finest pages of American history was written when President Andrew Jackson, on hearing the news of the death of Lafayette in 1834, ordered on behalf of the whole American people "that the same honors be rendered upon this occasion at the different military and naval stations as were observed upon the decease of Washington, the Father of His Country, and his contemporary in arms." It is a poetic and beautiful sentiment which has prompted the Alliance Francaise to resolve to lay on September 6, at the foot of the statues Union Square, in the city of New York, identical wreaths of American flowers intertwined in the colors of the two flags.

Notwithstanding the views of some historians many Americans are convinced of the truth of the following four propositions:

1. That the assistance tendered America and the sacrifices made by Lafayette and his companions in arms during the American Revolution were disinterested and prompted by the almost universal enthusiasm of the French people of all classes of that generation for the American cause.

2. That Louis XVI. and his Ministers—Turgot, Necker, Vergennes, &c.—did not believe that the interests of France would be promoted by war with England, were opposed to it, and predicted that its cost would be ruinous.

3. That the Treaty of Alliance of 1778 and France's active participation in the war were forced upon the King and his Ministers by the invincible sympathy and constancy of the French people themselves, who were ready and willing to make all necessary sacrifices, and that the war had no other object than helping us to secure our independence.

4. That the ultimate cost of the war to France was very much more than most Americans have realized and disastrous to the Royal Treasury.

5. The King's advisers well knew that the material interests of France were to keep neutral and profit by the embarrassment of England. The latest English historian upon the subject, Sir George Otto Trevelyan declares in his "American Revolution":

"If France had been content to maintain a pacific attitude throughout the whole period of the American troubles, she would have been awarded by an immense accession of wealth and a secure and exalted position among the nations of the world. Those advantages, moreover, would have accrued to her automatically and inevitably, without risk or exertion on her part."

The French statesmen advising Louis XVI. fully understood the practical situation and would never have consented to war unless their hands had been forced by the popularity of the American cause and the ardent sympathy of the French people with our struggle for independence. The Prime Minister of Spain pronounced the Treaty of Alliance of February 6, 1778, "a glaring instance of Quixotism." And France then stipulated for no advantage to herself and no reinbursement, but on the contrary agreed to make no claim, whatever might be the result of the war. In order to realize the extent of the "magnanimous policy" of France toward America, as Hamilton expressed it, every American should read the Treaty of Alliance, unique in our own history and the most generous in the annals of the world.

There were, of course, all kinds of intrigues and collateral movements, such as the pressure of the military party and from Frederick of Prussia and the longing for revenge on England. Nevertheless the controlling influence was the general demand of the French people, a demand which was fundamentally unselfish and which ultimately became irresistible. Nor should we ever forget that the French Queen, Marie Antoinette, was enthusiastically pro-American.

I have not the rashness to stir up the old and buried controversies as to the total of loans and gifts to America from Louis XVI. and various Frenchmen. I doubt whether ever these direct loans were ever entirely repaid; certainly the debt to Beaumarchais was never fully discharged, and none of the gifts was ever returned. We Americans must accept the statement of Pickering, our Secretary of State of 1797, who in a despatch to the American Minister at Paris declared that "all the loans and supplies received from France in the American war, amounting nearly to 53,000,000 livres," had been paid in 1795, that is, twelve years after the treaty of peace. But there still remains a far greater item, and that is the actual cost to the Royal Treasury of the American Alliance, which as matter of fact bankrupted France and was one of the principal causes of the French Revolution seven years later.

The King of France did not plunge into the Franco-American Alliance and consequent war with England in ignorance of its cost and its danger. Turgot pointed out to him that the first cannon shot in any such war would mean the bankruptcy of France. As it turned out, the salvation of America involved the utter ruin of the French monarchy. There is, however, much uncertainty as to the actual figures of the cost to France of participation in the war. The French archives show a direct expenditure of 1,507,500,000 livres, but these figures do not include payments made in and after the year 1783, which must have been very large.

Prof. Marion of the College of France has expressed the opinion that the total expenditures were fully 2,000,000,000 livres. Much information will be found in his "Histoire Financiere de la France depuis 1715," and in Gomel's "Les Causes Financieres de la Revolution Francaise." Fiske in his "Critical Period" puts the expenditure of France at 1,400,000,000 francs. Trevelyan states the following in a note to his "American Revolution": "It was calculated that between the years 1778 and 1783 the war with England cost the French treasury £48,000,000. It was the main cause of those financial difficulties which led immediately up to the Revolution of 1789." This would be equivalent to 1,200,000,000 livres (francs), or $240,000,000, at a time when the purchasing power of money was very much greater than in the twentieth century. Indeed it is probably not an exaggeration to say that the purchasing power of gold was then nearly three times what it is in our day.

In an introduction to Perkins's "France in the American Revolution" Ambassador Jusserand wrote in 1911 as follows:

"Ruinous it was indeed, costing the French treasury $772,000,000; but public opinion remained faithful to the struggling States. The people groaned under the weight of taxation, but never grumbled at the expense of such a cause. Peace came, France kept her word; she did not try to recover any of her possessions on the American continent; she made a pro-American peace, not an anti-English one. Public opinion again was fully satisfied; what it wanted had been secured; there were no protests against the moderation shown toward the adversary; the joy was universal. Years after the war the same pro-American feelings which had apparently taken deep root still prevailed, as shown by the French National Assembly's adjourning at the news of the death of Franklin; the French army going into mourning at the death of Washington, and the glowing eulogies of the new republic still sent home by its French visitors."

M. Jusserand in a note refers to Perkins's work as his authority for the figure "$772,000,000," but he did not independently verify Perkins's figures in view of the latter's reputation for accuracy. Perkins, however, did not say whether it was dollars or livres. After corresponding with Mr. Perkins's widow it now seems to me probable that Mr. Perkins meant livres and not dollars. The work was published after Mr. Perkins's death. In a note found among his papers is the following: "Chas. Gomel, Les Derniers Controleurs (pp. 36-37). A pamphlet appearing in July, 1782, calculated that the amount which American independence had cost down to that time was 772 millions and that commercial relations had not become more important." The expenses of the year 1782, probably part of those of 1781, and those which must have accrued in 1783, could not have been known by July, 1782.

In considering the inevitable expense assumed by France it must be borne in mind that the burden was not confined to sending fleets and armies to America, the West Indies and the Floridas, but required a very costly war at sea all over the world with the greatest maritime power of history; it necessitated the protection of French ports and dependencies by fleets and armies, and it called for campaigns not only in America but also in Europe, Africa and Asia. The great naval victory of Suffren was won in Asia. It is therefore quite possible, if not probable, that the total cost of the war to France during the five years of its continuance was fully $772,000,000, although it must be admitted that the official records as preserved, but not by any means complete, do not support so high a figure.

But even if the total was only 1,200,000,000 or 1,500,000,000 or 2,000,000,000 livres (that is, approximately $240,000,000 or $300,000,000 or $400,000,000) and not $772,000,000, the amount was still stupendous for those days and for a country having a population estimated at 22,000,000. This prodigal outpouring of treasure brought France practically no advantage or benefit; in fact, less than no gain, except the withdrawal of the English Commissioner from Dunkirk.

The amount expended in our cause has certainly never been repaid by us to France in any way or form; and while this expenditure for our benefit could never be regarded strictly as a debt in the commercial or business sense, it certainly was and still is a moral obligation for generous and unselfish service rendered to us at the most critical period in our history, an obligation which, in the fine phrase of Washington, must always call for "the most unalterable gratitude"—unforgettable, imperishable, eternal—on the part of every citizen of the United States. That feeling of gratitude should now prompt us Americans of all classes to see to it that the bereaved and orphaned and maimed and destitute of the heroic French people shall not suffer or be allowed to want while we are enjoying the abundance of the blessed country which French valor and sacrifice did so much to render free and independent.

The celebration of the anniversary of Lafayette's birth next Wednesday, September 6, should be availed of as a fitting occasion to show the French people and the world that history shall not inscribe on its rolls that the Americans of our generation failed in the gratitude to which Washington pledged America for all time; that when France was afflicted she did not appeal to us in vain; or better and nobler and more fitting still, that she did not have to appeal to us at all, but that inspired by the lofty spirit and example of Lafayette and his generation we sprang unasked to the succor of the French, proud and rejoicing in the privilege of at last being able to return in some measure the great service so generously, heroically and unselfishly rendered to us when we were weak, poor and friendless a century and a third ago.

How sublime would it be if our generation out of its plenty should now raise a fund somewhat commensurate with what France expended in our need, and apply it to her relief. Every man, woman and child who has contributed or may contribute to the succor of France in these days of devastating war truly repays part of what we Americans have long owed to a great, generous and noble people.

Gold Medal presented to Lafayette by Twenty-seventh Regiment New York National Guard

Portrait of Lafayette by J.B. Le Paon at the close of Campaign 1781 in Virginia Owned by Rodman Wanamaker
Engraved by Noel Le Mire

J J JUSSERAND
French Ambassador to the United States

THE IMPRESS OF LAFAYETTE.

LAFAYETTE left a deeper impression upon the United States than did any other soldier from a foreign soil who offered his sword to the cause of American liberty. Indeed, as a national figure and a national hero he may be said to stand next to the illustrious Washington, to whom he was friend, counsellor and companion in arms. There is, therefore, a Lafayette tradition which readily finds new adherents in the present movement for a nationwide celebration of the anniversary of the birth of the gallant French Marquis who left home and family and all the comforts and luxury which came from exalted rank in order to follow the destiny of the Thirteen Colonies.

Although the American people in this generation has not as lively a sense of appreciation of the great services of Lafayette as it had in the earlier years of the republic, there are not wanting reminders and memorials of the French nobleman. He had come in contact with the people of all parts of the country, and by his travels had left an impress even upon remote hamlets. Records of him are kept in the archives of many of the old American families. There are scores of the descendants of the belles of those days who cherish the traditions that once the young nobleman danced with their great-grandmother.

After the War of the Revolution Lafayette returned to France and in 1784 revisited the United States. He was received with enthusiasm and hailed as a national hero. He went through the throes of the French Revolution and fought the battles of his own country, and in 1824, when he was sixty-seven years old, he again visited the United States, accompanied by his son, George Washington Lafayette, and made a triumphal progress throughout the United States.

Congress conferred upon him $200,000 and a grant of 24,000 acres of land. The cities vied with each other in doing him honor. He had changed much, for in appearance he reflected the democratic ideas which he had fostered throughout the years. As the dashing and romantic Marquis had captured the hearts of the men of his travels throughout the country stimulated the naming of communities great and small, of squares and streets, and various institutions in his honor. He reached at that time every part of the country that was open to the transportation of the time.

The name of Lafayette appears all over the United States map and especially in the Eastern and middle Western States. In New York we have such towns as Lafayetteville. There are towns and cities known as Lafayette in Indiana, Iowa, Kentucky, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, two in Ohio, in Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. Mississippi has its Lafayette Springs, and in the Franconia chain we have Mount Lafayette.

In the city of New York there is a Lafayette street in Manhattan and in Brooklyn a Lafayette avenue. A fort named for the comrade of Washington still rears its red battlements at the Narrows. Manhattan alone has two statues to him, one in the Union Square modelled by Bartholdi, the other in Manhattan avenue and 114th street by the same sculptor, which represents Washington and Lafayette standing side by side. The Governor's room at the City Hall has a remarkable portrait of the Marquis as he was when he paid his last visit to this country. It is from the brush of Samuel F. B. Morse.

To realize how deeply Lafayette impressed his personality on the United States it is necessary for one to refresh his memory concerning the history of that very extensive pilgrimage which the Marquis made here on his second visit. He and his son reached these shores on the packet Cadmus on August 16, 1824. The vessel came to anchor off Staten Island and as the cable was paid out there appeared a rainbow whose end seemed to fall on Fort Lafayette, just out from the Brooklyn shore of the slender strait which forms the entrance of New York harbor.

In deference to the wishes of the reception committee, Lafayette did not arrive in New York city until the following day. The Cadmus was towed up to the Battery by the steamboats Chancellor Livingston and Robert Fulton. The Marquis was welcomed at Castle Garden and continued his triumphal progress to the City Hall. All that he said seemed to capture the good will of the American people. Asked by a member of the reception committee as to what title he preferred to be addressed by, he replied that he was an American general. Indeed he was then the only surviving general of the American revolution. Again he referred to himself as an American who had just returned from a long visit to Europe.

As the Marquis or the General had given the name of Washington to his son, so thousands of Americans bestowed upon their sons the name of Lafayette, especially in the years 1824 to 1826 inclusive. The banquet at the City Hotel, the reception and later the splendid ball given at Castle Garden, attended by six hundred of the most fashionable and distinguished men and women of the time, were features of the visit of Lafayette to New York city. Before he left the country he came back three times and on each occasion his welcome was as enthusiastic as the first.

It took him five days to make the journey in his carriage from New York to Boston. He had ovations at Greenwich, New Haven, New London, Providence, where beautiful young girls flung flowers in his path. Boston gave fetes in his honor. He visited Harvard University, he called on the venerable John Quincy Adams and passing the house of the widow of John Hancock of Declaration of Independence fame he rose in his carriage, which stopped before her door, to bow to her, for he recognized her at her window.

At Lexington he read across the roadway the legend, "Welcome, Friend of America, to the Birthplace of American Liberty." There too were fourteen of the seventy Minute Men upon whom the British troops had fired in 1775. He returned to New York, where in honor of his birthday, on September 6, the Castle Garden ball was given as an expression of gratitude to the faithful patriot. The General started in another direction, and West Point, Newburgh, Poughkeepsie, Troy, Hudson and Albany spread their welcoming boards and gave to him the freedom of their cities. He was the guest of the nation at Washington.

After he left the United States he was followed by many manifestations of good will. Among them was the remarkable gold medal presented to him by the Twenty-seventh Regiment, New York National Guard, of this city, in 1832 through James Fenimore Cooper, who was then living in Paris.

His death in 1834 plunged this nation in grief and the cities where he had been entertained held public memorial services. The observances in the city of New York were especially impressive.

Lafayette day, in view of the fact that so many of the States and cities east of the Alleghenies were in touch with the French hero of our Revolution, is likely to be well observed. Here in New York a committee of 100 representative citizens is preparing a programme and there will be a dinner at which Ambassador Jusserand, representing France, will be the principal speaker. He will also be in Fall River on Labor day, where an equestrian statue of Lafayette is to be unveiled. New Orleans will unveil a bust of the Marquis in Lafayette Square, and there will be exercises at the hotel where he was entertained when he visited the Southern city.

The interest taken in the approaching anniversary indicates that it will have a definite place on the American calendar.

HINDENBURG, GERMANY'S HOPE

By JULIUS KRAUSE.

WHO had heard the name Hindenburg before the battle of Tannenberg? No one in Germany except the Kaiser and the military men. But on August 29, 1914, General Quartermaster von Stein sent out the famous telegram: "Our troops in Prussia and the leadership of Major-Gen. von Hindenburg have defeated the Russian army, which came from Narew, consisting of five army corps and three divisions of cavalry, in a three days battle near Gilgenburg and Ortelsburg, and they are following the enemy over the frontier."

At once the name of Von Hindenburg was known to the German nation and to the whole world—Germany had a new national hero. Fame has again knocked at Von Hindenburg's door, for he now holds the destinies of the Central Powers in his hand by his new appointment as chief of the great German General Staff.

The people of Germany will never forget that it was Von Hindenburg who turned the tide of Russian arms in East Prussia from victory to defeat and drove the armies of the Czar back to Dwina; that he had stood from that day to this a bulwark between Germany and the enemy on her eastern border.

Hindenburg is very tall and broad-shouldered. His features remind us of Bismarck—"hewn with an axe." He is idolized by his soldiers, who feel that they are the best taken care of when he is in command. He is human when he is with his men, but at the same time he is bound to get the last ounce of vigor out of his armies. His strategy is admired by friend and foe. He always knows how to find the weakest point of the enemy. He never gives up, and keeps at it like a bulldog.

After defeating the enemy he follows up his victory in the most merciless fashion. He gives the enemy no chance to rest and recuperate. He draws his men with an unheard of energy, but they are always ready to give him their last drop of blood and their last bit of strength. They feel satisfied, confident and happy when Hindenburg is in command. His companion, friend, adviser, computor and best comrade is the chief of his staff, Gen. von Ludendorf, who is praised as one of the best officers of the whole German army.

Von Hindenburg is very real, but at the same time myths have surrounded him as they did Bismarck and Von Moltke. One of the best books published about Von Hindenburg's personality and his private life, his youth and his development has been written by his brother, Bernhard von Hindenburg. If you read this book you will be struck by the sentimentalities of young Von Hindenburg. He went to the "Jahrmarket" in Glogau, but did not spend any money on himself; he bought for his grandmother sixpence worth of candied orange peels because the old lady liked to munch it; some chocolate

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Field Marshal von Hindenburg.